

Incunabulum Incunabulorum.

The Gutenberg Bible on Vellum In the Vollbehr Collection



An Authentic Story of the Choicest Book of Christendom
told anew

by Edwin Emerson

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BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA



JOHANNES GUTENBERG

POSTHUMOUS PORTRAIT BY AN UNKNOWN RHENISH ARTIST

LARGE OIL PAINTING NOW IN POSSESSION OF MR. GUSTAV ZEESE
AT GREAT NECK, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

Incunabulum Incunabulorum.

The Gutenberg Bible on Vellum in the Vollbehr Collection

**An Authentic Story of the
Choicest Book of Christendom**

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by Edwin Emerson



Tudor Press • New York

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TABLE
OF
ALL THE KNOWN GUTENBERG BIBLES ON VELLUM STILL EXTANT

OWNER	PLACE	SINCE	VOLS.	CONDITION
<i>Dr. Otto H. F. Vollbehr</i>	<i>Berlin</i>	1926	three	<i>perfect and complete</i>
Huntington Library.....	San Gabriel	1911	two	two leaves missing
Vatican Library.....	Rome	1902	two	six leaves missing
Morgan Library.....	New York	1897	two	four leaves missing
Buch Museum.....	Leipzig	1886	two	one leaf missing
<i>British Museum</i>	<i>London</i>	1846	two	<i>perfect and complete</i>
Universitäts-Bibliothek.....	Goettingen	1810	two	imperfect, but complete
<i>Bibliothèque Nationale</i>	<i>Paris</i>	1788	two	<i>perfect and complete</i>
Staats Bibliothek.....	Berlin	18th C'y	two	two leaves missing
Archiepiscopal Library.....	London	1610	one	Old Testament missing
Landes-Bibliothek.....	Fulda	16th C'y	one	New Testament missing
Universitäts-Bibliothek.....	Leipzig	16th C'y	two	one leaf missing

Besides the above vellum copies there are at sixteen cities parchment fragments consisting mostly of single detached leaves from the 42-line Bible. The most important of these fragments, comprising sixteen disconnected leaves, is at the Royal Library of Stockholm. The other places are Augsburg, Berlin, Cambridge, Dresden, Dublin, Frankfurt on the Main, Hanover, London, Mainz, Nuremberg and Providence in Rhode Island. The four remaining parchment fragments in 1928 were still in the hands of book dealers.

INCUNABULATOR INCUNABULATORUM

THE most precious masterpiece of the earliest Christian art of printing, as all booklovers are agreed, is Johannes Gutenberg's Bible in Latin. The choicest of all the forty-five specimens of Gutenberg Bibles still remaining in existence, so all connoisseurs of early printing likewise are agreed, are the twelve printed on vellum. Of this famous first and only parchment edition there remain but three perfect specimens of the complete Scriptures. To wit: The two volume Gutenberg Bible acquired by the French Bibliothèque Royale in 1788; another two volume Gutenberg Bible acquired by the British Museum in 1846; and the famous three volume Gutenberg Bible of the Carinthian monastery of St. Paul, acquired in 1926 by Dr. Otto H. F. Vollbehr of Berlin for \$305,000, the highest recorded price ever paid for any book. Yet Dr. W. S. Rosenbach, the well-known antiquary of Philadelphia, in his "Books and Bidders" has predicted that the next price of a mere paper copy of this rarest of books will be more than one million dollars.

Inasmuch as that particular Bible on vellum is not only the costliest book in the world, but is also the only Gutenberg Bible bound long ago in three volumes—all others from that earliest press having been bound in two—this cornerstone of the great Vollbehr Collection of 3,000 fifteenth century prints may fitly be called an *incunabulum incunabulorum*, or the book of earliest printed books.

When newspapers all over the world printed a despatch from Vienna reporting Dr. Vollbehr's acquisition of a Gutenberg Bible from an old abbey in a valley of the Carinthian Alps for the staggering price of \$305,000 that bibliophile forthwith was overwhelmed with written offers of old family Bibles, some of which were scarcely worth the price of the postage stamps on the envelopes. Some of the letter writers had got the idea that a "Mr. Gutenberg" had recently died in some out-of-the-way place in the Alps and that his widow or children had disposed of his

family Bible for a colossal price. Accordingly they wrote either to Dr. Vollbehr, as a presumably gullible book maniac, or to the Rev. Odilo Frankl, the abbot of that alpine monastery, or as a last recourse, to "Mrs. Gutenberg" at Mainz in Germany, hopefully offering their old family Bibles at prices ranging from 300,000 to 1,000 dollars, or "anything in reason."

Since there still is so much confusion about the personality of the original John Gutenberg and of his no less original partner, John Fust, who together with their disciple, Peter Schoeffer, first mystified their contemporaries with the jealously guarded secrets of their reputed cabalistic alchemy behind the closed doors of their uncanny workshop, some scraps of information about those wellnigh mythical men, whose doubtful names have come down to us as Johannes Gutenberg and Johannes Faustus, may not be amiss.

The real name of the reputed first Christian inventor of the art of printing from movable cast types originally was not Gutenberg, but Hans or Henne zum Gaensfleisch, called Sorgenloch (or Sulgeloch). He was born in 1398 at Mainz. His father was Frielo zum Gaensfleisch, a denizen and public accountant of Mainz, who derived his name from the manor Gaensfleisch, which his great-grandfather Petermann had acquired about the middle of the 14th century. He died at Mainz in 1414. Henne's mother was Elizabeth Wyrich from an ancient castle and hamlet on the upper Rhine near Vaduz, still known as Gutenberg. So she was called Elsgen zum Gutenberg and, as the last of her race, according to German custom of that time, passed her surname to her oldest son, John. By his contemporaries the name was variously spelled Gutenberg, Guddenperk, Guettenbergk, Gudenburch, Guttенburgh, Guthimberg or Gudenperch with the Latin cognomen *Ansercarnus Bonemontanus* or *de Bonomonte*. In one contemporary Mainz document alone his German name was spelled in three different ways.

After political disturbances in the archbishopric of Mainz on the entry there of Emperor Frederic III, the mother of Henne with her young son fled to Strassburg, where they lived



GUTENBERG ON THE RHINE
REPUTED ANCESTRAL HOME OF THE MASTER PRINTER'S MOTHER

as political refugees or exiles. Frau vom Gutenberg's son is first mentioned in a Strassburg document of 1420 as Henchen (little John) and again as Henne in a manuscript record of 1427-28, but in neither instance is his residence specified. Grown to manhood he is reported to have become betrothed to Ennel von der Iserin Thuere, a noblewoman, who is understood to have brought action against him for breach of promise. In the Mainz Act of Reconciliation of March 28, 1430, Johannes Gutenberg is specially mentioned as absent from Mainz (*nit inlendig*), so he may fairly be assumed to have remained in Strassburg, where he is known to have resided later, until after the death of his mother there in 1433. His presence in Strassburg became a matter of public record on March 14, 1434, when young Henne zum Gutenberg had a legal fracas with one Nicolaus, a town clerk of Mainz, on the latter's visit to Strassburg, growing out of a claim for 310 Rhenish guilders on the part of the Gutenbergs or Gaensfleischs against the city of Mainz. In settlement of the claim Hans Gutenberg exacted annual payments of 12 guilders from Mainz. By this time he was a man of consequence in the city. Thus, during civic processions he enjoyed the knightly privilege of riding horseback among the mounted constables of the town.

Because of this long continued residence in Strassburg, that city later claimed Gutenberg's invention of printing or type founding as a Strassburg achievement and erected a handsome monument to Gutenberg, which still adorns Strassburg. In proof of this claim Strassburgers point to old records of Gutenberg's partnership in some sort of printing enterprise with a Strassburg burgher, Andreas Dritzehn, and with the two brothers Heilmann. In a Strassburg lawsuit between Gutenberg and the deceased Andreas' surviving brothers for admission to the firm as partners in 1438 Hans Duenne, a goldsmith, swore that he had received nearly a hundred guilders from Gutenberg (presumably for furnishing gold leaf) "merely for that which belonged to printing." (*Allein das zu dem trucken gehoeret*). The crucial word in the testimony is *trucken*, meaning to "press" or to "print". During the lawsuit a witness further testified that Gutenberg

after the sudden death of his partner Dritzehn sent his servant to their joint workshop to demolish a handpress there, lest the secret of his invention be discovered.

As a matter of fact, Gutenberg's secret process appears to have been betrayed then, for presently one Prokop Waldfoghel, a silversmith from Prague, who, so it is known, had met one of the Dritzehns in Lucerne in 1439, turned up at Avignon with a casting device and several small cases of small metal types, specified in an Avignon protocol of 1444 as "two alphabets of steel, two iron forms, one steel screw, forty-eight forms of tin" by which Waldfoghel astonished the natives there with his attempts at "writing artificially" during the years 1444-1446. This has been proved by Abbé Requin from five recently discovered Avignon notarial protocols in Latin concerning money transactions of Waldfoghel with a Magister Manudius of Dax, with Georgius de la Jardina and with a Jew of Avignon, named Davinus de Codarossia. From those protocols it appears that Waldfoghel pawned two alphabets of steel (*duo abecedaria calibis*) and one Hebrew alphabet of 27 iron letters for 36 florins after having undertaken to teach Codarossia the new art of "writing artificially". From the meagreness of Waldfoghel's types it would appear that his imprints were limited to single initials or short names, but that he failed to produce or manifold regular texts. Unfortunately no scrap of these interesting attempts at printing has come down to us.

It was the betrayal of his secret printing process in Strassburg, most likely, that determined Gutenberg to give up his work there and to move away. The last evidence of Gutenberg at Strassburg is a record of his admission to the goldsmiths' guild there in 1444, and a further entry of his name in the city tax register for having paid his private wine cellar tax under the date of March 12th of that same year.

There is a further unsubstantiated report that Gutenberg's first product from his Strassburg press was a *Cisianus* in German, a crudely rhymed calendar sheet, said to have been printed in 1447, but this has been proved a later print. One year after-

ward Gutenberg is known to have moved to Mainz, for there is an authentic record of his debt to a kinsman of 150 guilders, there contracted on October 6, 1448. Thenceforth Gutenberg staid in Mainz, as shown by several fully authenticated documents.

It is by no means easy to determine which Gutenberg documents are trustworthy, and which are not, since the intense rivalry between Strassburg and Mainz for the honor of claiming Gutenberg as their own has brought forth no end of false statements and even forgeries.

In the 18th century Professor Gothelf Fisher, a city librarian of Mainz, claimed to have discovered old documents from the 15th century concerning Gutenberg in Mainz, which much later were proved to have been forged by the professor himself.

His successor in the Mainz library, Fr. J. Bodmann (1754-1820) likewise forged several alleged Gutenberg documents and even fabricated the official seals thereto, among them a purported letter of Henne Gaensfleisch to a non-existent sister Bertha. This furnished the material for a later German historical novel and drama, the author of which believed in those documents.

The latest attempt at selling a spurious Gutenberg letter for a fancy price was made in an impudent offer to bibliophiles of note sent out early in 1927 by a Viennese engraving firm. Inasmuch as Dr. Vollbehr, who had just purchased his famous Gutenberg Bible, was then in New York, where he had exhibited his collection of incunabula at the National Arts Club, the Viennese firm there addressed the German bibliophile in English thus:

"Gentleman! The owner of a highly valuable letter of Gutenberg, the inventor of the art of printing, has charged us, with the sale of this relic, but does not wish to make his name public at present. This letter of which we beg to enclose you a photographic copy is certified genuine by competent authorities and its value has been estimated at \$25,000. The letter represents an extraordinarily historical value for the reason that Gutenberg mentions for the first time his inven-

tion, in it sueing for a quiet retreat, where do (sic) practise his art, without being taken for a devilish sorcerer and running the risk of losing his head according to the morals of his times. The contents of the letter translated into modern German runs as follows:"

There followed in modern German a pretended communication from Johann (Henne) Guddenperkh yclept Gennsfleisch to Abbot Dietrich of the Cloister Formpach in Bavaria, in which the printer seeks refuge in the abbey for himself and for his printing press because there was a pestilence in Strassburg and the harassed printer was weary of having to keep his craft secret from his roguish enemies for fear of losing his head.

A photograph, attached to the modern German translation, showed what purported to be an ancient script in antiquated German lingo and archaic spelling with the none too convincing signature "Guddenperkh", dated at Strassburg on the Tuesday after Saint Matthew's of the Holy Twelve Apostles, 1438, and affixed thereto an elaborate leaden seal with an undistinguishable device.

Dr. Vollbehr had no trouble in speedily detecting some blatantly false notes in this manifest forgery and he soon found his condemnation of the spurious document confirmed by the most competent living authorities on old German manuscripts. So he did not even answer the impudent offer of more treasures to flow from the busy forger's pen, as contained in this closing paragraph of the Viennese engravers' letter in English:

"The owner of this unique document merely looks upon the sale from a business point of view and being not in a hurry is resolved to sell it without any other consideration only to the highest bidder. If through our medium a favourable sale can be realized, further documents of highest historical value are ready for sale. We are, Gentleman, yours truly" &c.

Another document, once questioned as possibly spurious, is the so-called Helmasperger brief of November 6, 1455 (now at

Goettingen) recognized recently as a genuine sworn deposition of testimony in the lawsuit concerning Gutenberg's business dealings with Johannes Faustus in Mainz. During the Gutenberg festival at Mainz in 1900 Dr. Bockenheimer, a magistrate of Mainz, voiced his opinion that copies of this document had been manifolded in 1600 by the descendants of Faust von Aschaffenburg, who were anxious to trace their lineage to the famous Fust (or Faustus) of Mainz. The same German sceptic cast doubts on several other old Gutenberg documents from alleged Strassburg archives.

The later English bibliographer Palmer in his "History of Printing" cites an old book in the Bodleian Library with the title *Liber Dialogus Gregorii* showing the colophon: *Factum est per Johannem Guttenbergium apud Argentinam anno milesimo CCCCLVIII.* (Made by John Gutenberg at Strassburg in the year one thousand 458.) This colophon with its falsely Latinized name "Guttenbergius" instead of Bonemontanus, speedily was proved a forgery, perpetrated, so it is believed, at Oxford.

Forged, likewise, is the pretended imprint of Gutenberg in a *Tractatus de Celebratione Missarum*, claimed to have been presented in 1463 to the Carthusian monastery near Mainz.

In view of all those proved falsifications there are also serious misgivings about certain suspicious documents, bearing on Gutenberg in Strassburg, produced by Jacob Wencker, a keeper of archives at Strassburg, and by the Rev. J. D. Schoepflin, a canon of the church of St. Thomas in that city.

Notwithstanding all these mystifications or misunderstandings and the doubts arising therefrom, a few outstanding facts have been definitely established about the first Christian inventor of typography. Thus it is known for certain that he did some experimental work in Strassburg with apparatus for casting movable type from moulds made by single letters carved on staves of beech wood. Hence the German word *Buchstaben* for alphabet letters—from *Buche* (beech) and *Stab* (a stave). This has been proved by the indubitable Strassburg records of Gutenberg's lawsuit with the Dritzehn brothers.

In 1448 Gutenberg returned to his native Mainz, where he borrowed 150 Rhenish guilders from his kinsman, Arnold Gelthus, and later 800 guilders from Hans Fust, a goldsmith of Mainz, who already had made a name for himself in Paris under the Latinized appellation of Johannes Faustus. Gutenberg had interested Fust in his invention and the money, so Fust stated in a later lawsuit of 1455, was advanced to Gutenberg for tools, apparatus, metal, parchment, paper and wages of pressmen, in short, for a complete workshop with printing presses. The work had to be carried on privily behind closed doors and curtained windows with but a few helpers sworn to secrecy, for in those days there were no patent laws nor other legal protection of new inventions, so the inventor of a lucrative device or new process for saving work had to guard against dishonest imitators. As younger partner in Gutenberg's secret entered Fust, the financial backer of his invention, who in 1452 advanced another 800 and again 50 guilders, since his first loan or grubstake had proved quite insufficient for the work at hand. Later Fust sued Gutenberg for 2062 guilders (principal and interest), stating that he himself had to take up 1550 guilders at 6% interest, which money, together with his own, "went for our common work on the books." Gutenberg lost the suit by default and thereby forfeited most of his type and printing paraphernalia hypothecated to Fust.

From the mysterious secrecy of the two partners' first experiments with metal type-casting at Gutenberg's workshop in Mainz a story arose among their curious fellow townsmen that Gutenberg and Fust were alchemists or necromancers engaged in some black art,—as indeed they were. And thus it came that some of the credit for the first invention of printing went to Fust, the junior partner. Accordingly both men together were mentioned as the inventors of printing in the Cologne Chronicle of 1499. Fourteen years later Abbot John Tritheim in his *Annals of Hirschgau* again pointed to Gutenberg and Fust as the first printers, stating that he was told so by Peter Schoeffer of Gernsheim, the son-in-law of Fust, who, so Schoeffer complained, had advanced over a thousand ducats of his money for the composi-

tion and printing of Gutenberg's ambitious first task, the Bible, before they had finished even with their third quire of vellum. According to the same authority Gutenberg and Fust first printed from wooden blocks or staves until the casting of metal types had been perfected.

It is a moot question what were the inventor's first successful essays in printing. Some still cling to the erroneous opinion that it was the Strassburg *Cisianus*, a rhymed calendar in old German, of which but one leaf (now at Cambridge) has come down to us. Others think it was a sybilline poem in old German, of which a single page, treating of the Last Judgment and printed in 28 lines of recognized Gutenberg type, has survived. Others again think that Gutenberg made his first experiments with three successive editions of Aelius Donatus' little Latin grammar, of which fragments showing a format of 27 lines to the page are preserved in the great libraries of Berlin and Paris. Still others fain would give priority of printing with Gutenberg's types to a single-sheet astronomic calendar for the year 1448 or to some stray pages of another calendar, ascribed to the year 1454 because of its reference to a Christian victory over the Turks, which is known to have been won on December 6, 1454.

Less open to controversy among such earlier essays at printing with undoubted types from Gutenberg's font are 13 printed leaves (of 31 lines each) of a Bull by Pope Calixtus granting to Paulinus Chappe, who came to Mainz on behalf of the King of Cyprus, the privilege of issuing indulgences to those of the faithful, who should contribute money for a campaign against the Turks. At the end of one of those indulgences, now in the Berlin library, an early rubricator wrote the date of 1456, so this now ranks with the Bible among earliest *dated* examples of Christian printing. When that date was recorded by the unknown rubricator, most, if not all the text of the great 42-line Bible must already have been set up at Mainz.

In view of the artistic superiority of Gutenberg's Bible, some of the best scholars of early printing hold that those other primitive incunabula, just mentioned, were not printed by Guten-

berg himself, but by some of his known assistants like Fust Schoeffer, Pfister, Keffer and Bechtold Ruppel of Hanau.

Scholars are still divided in their conjectures concerning the precise date when Gutenberg began to print his Bible, but they are all agreed that the great work was carried on between 1450 and 1456. It could not have been begun before the Spring of 1450, because it was then that Gutenberg obtained his first money from Fust, nor could it have been completed later than the middle of 1456, for on August 15, 1456, Heinrich Kremer, a vicar of St. Stephen's Church of the Mainz diocese, wrote a note on the last page of one of Gutenberg's Bibles, now preserved in the French Bibliothèque Nationale, recording the circumstances that he had finished rubricating and binding the whole work on the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin of that year. The still earlier date 1453, likewise believed to be a rubricator's or corrector's note, written in a 15th century hand, is jotted on the reverse of the 324th leaf of a Gutenberg Bible in Leipzig.

The best incunabula experts have computed that at most 35 vellum Bibles and perhaps 165 copies on paper were printed, making a total edition of 200 at the highest. Alone for the necessary vellum and paper, according to prices known to have obtained then, the printer must have paid 1350 Rhenish guilders worth perhaps \$750 in our money today.

Gutenberg's printing presses with his 220 different types and most of his tools after November 1455 were seized by Fust for debt and were removed by him to his own home in Mainz, where he started in the business of printing and selling books for himself with the later co-operation of his son-in-law Peter Schoeffer, whom he called his "famulus." Therefore it is safe to assume that Gutenberg before the autumn of 1455 had completed his great work, which unfortunately for himself and his junior partner not only failed of immediate financial success, but furthermore was found to have cost more in the making than it could ever bring in during the life-time even of the much younger Fust.

From the subsequent divergent signature marks of the 42-line Bible—small lower case letters and Arabic figures—it is sur-

vised that Gutenberg and Fust at their dissolution of partnership divided their stock of completed but unrubricated and unbound Bibles evenly and that each sold his share as best he could; Gutenberg finding most of his takers among the monasteries in and around Mainz, while Fust carried his copies to more distant customers in Erfurt, Leipzig, Basel and also in Paris.

Paul Schwenke in his *Gutenberg Festschrift* estimated that one unbound vellum copy, in order to help pay for the cost of the whole parchment edition (208 guilders for 2438 large sheep's hides) had to fetch at least 42 guilders. Yet one Bible could not be sold for much more than 50 guilders, since handwritten parchment Bibles, unbound and unrubricated, so it is recorded, fetched only 60 guilders at Strassburg and Mainz in those years. At Altenburg in 1465 one parchment copy of the *Catholicon*, now in Gotha, is known to have fetched 41 Rhenish guilders.

Though a business failure there was no doubt about the transcendent artistic success of Gutenberg's Bible. It was recognized at once as a *chef d'œuvre* of printing and has sustained this high reputation through the centuries to our present day.

The last official record of Gutenberg is a payment of interest to the St. Thomas Church at Mainz made in November 1457 by him and his bondsman, Martin Brecher. In 1465 Count Adolf of Nassau, the new ruler of Mainz, who took charge of the archbishopric after his conquest of the city in 1462, appointed Johannes vom Gutenberg a gentleman of his court and granted him a life pension for his high value to the city "by reason of the grateful and willing services rendered and that he may still render in the future." With the pension went a grant for wine and a gala court costume. This generous act of the Prince-Bishop, more than anything else, goes far to prove that the significance of Gutenberg's epoch-making invention was recognized by his contemporaries and that he was by no means regarded by his townsmen as a humble craftsman, but as an artist of rank and an inventor of genius.

Johannes Gutenberg died at his home in Mainz February 2, 1468 and according to a tradition was buried in a vault of the

Franciscan Church there. An entry in the archives of the Dominicans under that date states: *Obiit Dominus zum Gensfleisch habens arma Gensfleisch*. From the fact that in his house and workshop much printing apparatus was found, which the Prince-Bishop turned over to Dr. Conrad Humery, a Syndic of Mainz, as the one who at his own cost had procured it for Gutenberg, it would appear that the great master-printer had practised his new art to the very last. Dr. Humery's acknowledgment to the Bishop expressly mentioned several forms, types, instruments, implements and other things "belonging to the art of printing."

Thus Gutenberg is credited with the printing of the *Catholicon*, a Latin encyclopaedic dictionary by Johannes Balbus, the first edition of which, (with two closely set columns to the page) appeared in 1460 at Prince-Bishop Adolf's country seat in Elfeld (French: *Eltville*) near Mainz. Its last page contains this touching colophon:

"By the help of the Most High, at Whose will the tongues of infants become eloquent, and Who oft times reveals to the lowly that which he hides from the wise, this noble book, *Catholicon*, in the year of the Lord's Incarnation, 1460, in the bounteous city of Mainz of the renowned German nation, which the clemency of God has deigned with so lofty a light of genius and free gift to prefer and render illustrious above all other nations of the earth, without help of reed, stylus or pen, but by the wondrous agreement, proportion and harmony of punches and types, has been printed and finished . . ."

The *Catholicon* type after Gutenberg's death was used again by his relative Heinrich Bechtermuenze in a *Vocabularius* and in an edition of *St. Thomas Aquinas*, both printed at Elfeld in 1472.

Shortly before Gutenberg's death, he himself is held to have printed a beautiful 42-line Psalter, now lost, of which the only extant leaf is preserved at the French National Library.

In an edition of *Justinian*, printed by Schoeffer in the year of Gutenberg's death, some verses written at the end by Magister

Franciscus, a press corrector, state that "two Johannis, both of the city of Mainz, were the renowned first printers of books," meaning evidently Johann Gutenberg and Johann Fust.

In the same year (1468) Johannes Andreae, bishop of Aleria, wrote to Pope Paul II. in a dedication of his edition of *St. Jerome's Epistles*:

"Germany is to be honored forever for having been the inventress of the greatest utilities. Cardinal Cusa (who traveled in Germany before 1464) wished that the sacred art of printing, which then appeared arisen in Germany, were brought to Rome."

Two years after Gutenberg's death Guillaume Fichet, Prior of the Sorbonne, who introduced printing in Paris, wrote to Robert Gaguin, a French scholar of eminence, while referring to Germany:

"It is said that there, not far from the city of Mainz, a certain Johannes, (*cui cognomen Bonemontano*) whose surname came from the Gutenberger, first of all men thought out the art of printing (*impresoriam artem*), by means of which books are made with letters of metal, not with a reed, as the ancients did; nor with a pen, as is done at present."

Matthias Palmer of Pisa, another chronicler contemporary with Gutenberg, stated in his *Cronica Eusebii* under the year 1457 that "Johannes Gutenberg zum Jungen (name of a house), knight of Mainz, invented the art of printing in 1440."

Jac. Phil. Foresta of Bergamo in his *Supplementum Cronicarum* stated for the year 1458 that the art of printing books was first discovered in Germany, "according to some by Guthimberg of Strassburg, according to others by Faust, according to others again by Nicolas Jenson."

In 1474 John Philippus de Lignamine in his Roman Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors refers under the year 1459 to the printer Jacobus (sic) "with the surname of Gutenberg of Strassburg, and a certain other one, named Faustus, who printed

from metal forms on parchment, each being able to print 300 leaves a day."

In 1492 Peter Schoeffer stated in a colophon to Botho's Saxon Chronicle, printed by him at Mainz, that this city was the cradle of printing—*die eyn anefangk is der prenterey*. Had Schoeffer regarded his father-in-law Fust as the inventor of printing, he scarcely would have failed proudly to record it here, instead of mentioning merely the place where printing originated.

Still more to the point among all these contemporary notes is one in a German translation of Livy, printed in 1505 at Mainz, by the son of Peter Schoeffer and therefore a grandson of Johann Fust, which refers to "Johann Guettenbergk inventor of printing, 1450, and Johann Fust with Peter Schoeffer of Gernsheim improvers and perpetuators of the art."

Most telling of all is the explicit entry printed by Koelhoff in 1499 in his *Cronica van der hilliger Stat van Coellen*:

"The art of printing was found first of all in Germany at Mainz about the year 1440. From that time until 1450 the art, and what belonged to it, was tried out and in 1450, when it was a golden year, they began to print, and the first book that they printed, was the Bible in Latin in a large letter resembling that with which at present Missals are printed. Omnibus Omnibonus wrote in a preface to Quintilian that a Walloon from France, named Nicol Jenson, discovered this art; but that is untrue, for there are those still alive, who testify that books were printed at Venice before Nicol Jenson came there and began to cut and make letters. Rather, the first inventor of printing was a citizen of Mainz, named Junker Johan Gudenburch. From Mainz the art was introduced first of all into Cologne, then into Strassburg and afterward into Venice. The origin and progress of the art was told to the writer verbally by Ulrich Zell of Hanau (near Mainz), still printer at Cologne."



JOHANNES FAUSTUS

FROM A POSTHUMOUS ETCHING BY JORIS VAN VLEIT

A MAN OF MYSTERY

AFTER the completion of the master's great lifework his young coadjutor alone carried on the new craft under the name of Faustus. With the apparatus seized from his former partner and with a stock of finished Bibles obtained from him, Fust set himself up partly as a printer in Mainz and partly as an itinerant bookseller. His name like Gutenberg's was spelled variously by his contemporaries. Its Latin form was *Faustus*.

Fust's work as a printer by himself was woefully inferior to that of his former senior partner Gutenberg and also of Fust's later junior partner and son-in-law, Peter Schoeffer, judging by the difference in artistry between Gutenberg's noble masterpiece and a very primitive edition of Saint Augustine's *De Arte Praedicandi*, known to have been printed by Fust in 1459 at Mainz. Perhaps the most characteristic specimen of Fust's craft is a well preserved volume of that blackletter book in Dr. Vollbehr's private library, where there are also some characteristic examples of the collaboration of Fust with Schoeffer and of the beautiful books printed by Schoeffer alone. In that partnership, as well as in the previous one, Fust's partners—Gutenberg and, after him, Schoeffer—upheld the dexterous part, while Fust seems to have played a sinister rôle. At all events, the work he turned out, when left to himself, deserves to be called sadly fustian. His secretive practise of the black art of printing behind closed doors, his suspected dabbling with forbidden books of magic and his crafty imitations of formidable tomes, which together with some of Gutenberg's Bibles he palmed off as pretended manuscripts, got him in ill repute as a sorcerer and necromancer, who must have sold his soul to the Devil.

Thus the name of Faustus, like that of Merlin or Albertus Magnus, lives in romance as that of a famous wizard and alchemist, who delved in black art books and cabalistic formulæ in his search for the magic stone of the philosophers and their lost secret of turning common metals into gold.

All that is definitely known of Johannes Faustus, after his production of blackletter tomes at Mainz, is that he turned up

again as an old man in Paris, where the King of France, it is recorded, became interested in him and his books, and where he sold one or two Gutenberg Bibles, cunningly embellished by hand, as pretended antique manuscripts. One of these, according to tradition, was the famous Vollbehr Bible on parchment, which later turned up in a cloister of the Black Forest. In Paris he previously met Schoeffer, an artistic copyist and illuminator of manuscripts, whose new invention of a separate printing in red, saving the tedious labor of rubricating capital letters and initials by hand-painting, so charmed Faustus that he made Schoeffer his "famulus," i.e. confidant in his black art, and later gave him the hand of his youthful daughter Christine in marriage.

Of the uncanny man, who traveled through various lands of Christendom, under the name of Faustus, contemporary and later romance, from Christopher Marlowe down to Goethe, Boito and Busoni, has made so much ado, that his life story is lost in a maze of mystery. In Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* the name of Faust now stands as one of the most momentous *Leitmotive* in the history of man.

Concerning Faust, the doubtful wizard or charlatan, we have but few reliable records, and those few are queer, to say the least. Here are the most reliable among them:

Abbot John Trittheim of Wuerzburg on August 20, 1507, wrote to his friend, Johann Virdung, a court astrologer, denouncing a wandering scholar encountered in an inn at Gelnhausen, who called himself Faustus Junior, Magus Secundus, Prince of Necromancers. The abbot was so annoyed at Faustus' pretensions that he would have nothing to do with him.

In the university archives of Heidelberg there is a document of matriculation of the year 1509 containing an entry of the name "Johannes Faustus ex Simmern". It should be explained that Simmern was a village then in the diocese of Mainz. A later Heidelberg document also has been found, indicating that Johannes Faustus received a degree in philosophy.

A few years later Mutianus Rufus, a friend of Melanchthon, ran across Faustus at Erfurt. Rufus wrote in Latin to Melanchthon in a letter, dated October 3, 1513: "Eight days ago a certain

chiromancer, bearing the name of Faustus, a demigod of Heidelberg, came here. A boastful and fatuous fellow, who called himself a philosopher. The common herd admired him. I heard him boasting in the inn, but refrained from chastising his audacity. (*Qui daliena insania ad me?*) What is a stranger's insanity to me?"

After Faust had reappeared at Erfurt there was some scornful mention of him in Dr. Martin Luther's recorded table talk. At Erfurt no less than four Gutenberg Bibles, believed to have been sold there by Faust, are known to have received their first bindings. Dr. Faustus is again mentioned as turning up as a visitor in the monastery of Maulbronn and at the university of Igelstadt, where his dubious conduct gave such offence that he was expelled from the town by order of the council.

In an account book of the Prince-Bishop of Bamberg ruling at that time, is an entry under the date of February 12, 1520: "Item 10 guilders given and presented to Doctor Faustus, philosophus, in honor of his having cast a nativity for Reverendissimus." At the same time the archiepiscopal library of Bamberg acquired one of Gutenberg's Bibles, then still unbound. Perhaps His Most Reverend Highness, the Prince-Bishop, thought to atone by that pious purchase of Holy Writ for the venial sin of having his horoscope cast by a master of black art.

Fust's black art is again chidden in the Leipzig annals of 1525, where a Dr. Johannes Faustus is recorded as having given offence in Auerbach's wine cellar by bestriding a barrel there. That same date is given in the earliest German work about the famous wizard as the first time when Dr. Faustus openly practised his black art (*Schwartzkunst*). That Fust sold some Gutenberg Bibles there, would appear from the circumstance that two such Bibles got their first contemporary bindings at Leipzig. (One of these is now in the Huntington Library in California.)

Later the aged Faust passed through Switzerland, getting himself noticed as Basle, where another Gutenberg Bible found a contemporary customer. Faust then turned up in Paris, where he is known to have disposed of a costly manuscript or printed book to King Francis I, who is said to have made curious inquiries about Faust's black art.



JOHANNES FAUSTUS

FROM AN ETCHING BY REMBRANDT VAN RYHN

At a hoary age Faust reappeared in Switzerland, where his mysterious presence at Zurich was duly recorded by Dr. Gessner, a Swiss physician. It was whispered then that the wicked old wizard had unduly prolonged his years by an elixir of life or magic charm given him by the Devil, but that the spell was about to run out, whereupon the Fiend would exact his forfeit of death. Filippo Begardo of Bormio on the Swiss border in his *Index Sanitatis*, published in 1539, wrote disapprovingly of the charlatan:

"I would not have mentioned his name, but he himself acknowledged and did not deny that he was in person and also in name that Faust, who signed himself Philosophus Philosophorum. . . . Concerning him many have complained that they were swindled by him. . . . At his departure, indeed, many people were cheated. But what can one do about it? Gone is gone."

That same year Faust is supposed to have died. Count Froben Christoph, to whom Faust owed allegiance, set down in his Chronicle of Zimmern that Faust died in 1539 at Staufen in the Breisgau, adding:

"The books, which he left behind, have come into the possession of the Lord of Staufen, in whose province he died, and many persons afterwards have tried to obtain them."

Another tradition is that Faust died of the plague at Paris, but later German chroniclers agree that Beëlzebub carried off Faust as his prey before that plague. Some chroniclers say this happened at Knittlingen in Suabia, others prefer Staufen in the Breisgau.

The German poet Ulrich von Hutten's brother Philip, who consulted Faust in 1534 shortly before setting sail with the Welser's expedition to Venezuela, the land discovered by Amerigo Vespucci, wrote in 1540, after the disastrous outcome of their adventure in the New World, on hearing of the necromancer's death in Suabia:

"I must acknowledge that the philosopher Faustus divined it correctly, for we have had a very bad year indeed."

Of Faust's death Johann Gast, a Protestant clergyman at Basle, related in his *Sermones Convivales* of the same year:



FUST IN PARIS

A SALZBURG CARVING IN WOOD OWNED BY DR. VOLLBEHR

"The wretched man came to a terrible end, for the Devil strangled him. His corpse lay face downward on the bier all the time, though it was turned over five times."

Gast had encountered Faust at Basle not long before his death. The necromancer then was accompanied by a younger assistant, whom he called his *famulus*, and he also had a black dog, trained to fetch bread and other food for him. This dog Faust also called *Famulus*. Some thought the young man and the dog were one and the same, being in sooth an embodied Demon.

In a passing reference to Faust's death among Melanchthon's later table talks, recorded by one of his friends, the "Heidelberg doctor from Mainz, Faustus by name," is again mentioned with disapproval. Johann Mennel in his *Locorum Communium Collectanea*, published in 1563, relates how Melanchthon told him:

"I knew a man named Faustus from Kundling, a little town near my home. . . . He studied at Heidelberg and Cracow. . . . Later he wandered about in many places and spoke about secret studies. . . . He died in a village of Wurtemberg. He was found with his face twisted as though the Devil had killed him. . . . During his life he kept a dog, which was the Devil incarnate. This Faustus escaped from our town of Wittenberg, when the excellent prince, Duke Johann, had given the order that he was to be arrested. In a similar way he is said to have made his escape from Nuremberg."

This was confirmed by Andreas Horndorff in his *Promptuarium Exemplorum* a few years later, closing with the sentence:

"Such a necromancer was Johann Faustus, who practised many tricks through his black art."

A late fifteenth or early sixteenth century German manuscript of a book on magic, entitled *Hoellenzwang* ("Conquest of Hell"), now at Nuremberg, shows written on its first page this sentence:

"Secret and hidden and highly authenticated Magic Writings for the advantage of all, and which have been truly tested by me, Doctor Johann Faust, and found trustworthy in each and every case."

German scholars are divided in their opinions whether this curious manuscript is indeed a holograph by Faust himself or only the transcript of a scrivener. Some have advanced the doubtful theory that Fust, the printer, surreptitiously may have written down this forbidden screed himself, intending secretly to print a book therefrom. If Fust indeed printed any book of magic, no more scrap nor record has remained of it than of several other recorded incunabula on topics forbidden by the Church, and therefore burnt in public bonfires,—like most of the incunabula editions of Savonarola's sermons, for instance.

At all events the first printed edition of Faust's *Hoellenzwang*, known to us, was only published in Germany about 1607. Its title reads:

"Now for the first time from the Original written with his own hand by Dr. Faust, published for the particular pleasure of all artists by Johann de Luna."

Twenty years previously there had appeared at Frankfurt-on the Main the first printed account of the life of Faust under the title *Historia von D. Johanne Fausto, dem weltbeschreyten Schwartzkuenstler*. This book furnished the material for Christopher Marlowe's famous play.

Professor Durr, a doctor of theology at Altdorf, wrote in 1676 that all the queer stories told about Dr. Faustus were ecclesiastical legends maliciously invented by the monks in their wrath at the early printer Johann Fust, whose press deprived the monkish copyists and scribes of their lucrative trade in hand-copied books. In this connection Durr refers to an earlier statement by Henricus Schorus, a Netherlander, that a printer calling himself Faustus, who sold marvellously manifolded manuscripts in Paris, was taken for a magician.

The early orientalist Humphrey Prideaux, a canon of Norwich in the 17th century, in a work on the Old and New Testament wrote: "Johannes Faustus first invented the art of printing at Mainz. As he was taken to be a magician, a history of him was written here, known as Dr. Faustus." Evidently Prideaux had in mind the playwright Marlowe's "Tragicall History of D. Faustus," entered in Stationer's Hall in 1600.

Reichlin Meldegg, a German bibliophile of the last century, also expressed his conviction that the reputed wizard, Doctor Faustus, was the printer of Mainz. It was Meldegg, who first discovered that a Johannes Faust of Mainz, then already well along in years, had studied at Heidelberg, but Dr. Robert Petsch, another noted German bibliographer, on the other hand, has brought forward credible evidence that Faust's name or that of his son or grandson John was borrowed by a fellow student at Heidelberg, one Georg Savels (Latin: *Sabellicus*), who later traveled through the lands as a wandering scholar practising a charlatan's tricks and selling strange books under the false plumes of the mysterious printer long after the death of Fust, the evil genius of Gutenberg. Hence, perhaps, the charlatan's significant assumption of the *nom de guerre* "Faustus, Junior," as recorded by Abbot Tritheim after that wayside encounter with him in 1507.

This appears to be the opinion also of William Rose, the latest editor of *The History of Dr. John Faustus*, recently published. In his preface to the translation from the old German version he says:

"The earliest investigators thought the whole story was a mere legend, possibly invented by the monks as an expression of their hatred of the inventor of printing, though, as a matter of fact, it was only through financial sharp practise that Fust obtained possession of the printing outfit of the real inventor,—Gutenberg."

It is still undertermined whether it was the charlatan or the printer, who was portrayed posthumously by Jan Joris van Vleit in the Netherlands. His teacher Rembrandt's famous etching of Faust in his study evidently pictured the magician rather than the printer.

Be this as it may, Faust will always live in Old World song and story as the foremost wizard and master of black art in the great days of the Reformation. In America his name has been perpetuated in the Faustus Society, an association of employing printers.



THE BOOK OF BOOKS

NEW TESTAMENT OF DR. VOLLBEHR'S GUTENBERG BIBLE OPENED AT THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

GUTENBERG'S epoch-making masterpiece, the so-called 42-line Bible, has been described so often with minute analysis, that there is no occasion again to describe it here. Only this much for the sake of avoiding misunderstanding:

In the first edition on vellum, which was evidently printed before the later edition on paper, the first nine pages have but 40 lines, the tenth shows 41 lines, while all the succeeding pages of the unnumbered leaves have 42 lines. It is plain to any experienced printer that Gutenberg, while setting up St. Jerome's introductory Epistle to the Scriptures and the first chapter of Genesis, discovered that by skilfully filing off the shoulders of his large types he could squeeze first one and presently two more lines into the single column of his page, thus effecting an appreciable saving of his expensive quires of parchment leaves of thin sheepskin. After the first printing either Gutenberg or his quondam partner Fust must have decided to print another edition on paper, whereupon those early pages, showing fewer number of lines, were reset to correspond to the uniform style of 42 lines to the page, as appears in the later copies on paper.

Some of the same type was used over again by Fust's son-in-law thirty years later in his four-line title to a book on the Coronation of Emperor Maximilian, one of the three extant copies of which is owned by Dr. Vollbehr.

From the fact that another very early Bible with 36 lines to each page, printed from types known to have been used by Gutenberg, appeared at or near Bamberg during Gutenberg's lifetime, it was long believed that this 36-line Bible might be even older than the 42-line Bible, but Karl Dziatzko in his "*Was wissen wir vom Leben und von der Person Johann Gutenbergs*" conclusively has proved that the text of the 36-line Bible contains numerous errors from misreadings which can only be accounted for by the fact that it was set up by an ignorant or slovenly compositor, possibly Gutenberg's apprentice, Albrecht

Pfister, who failed accurately to reproduce the text of the 42-line Bible, which he was using as printer's copy. Of this later 36-line Bible, as of its 42-line predecessor, the Gutenberg Bible on vellum, but one perfect copy is known to exist outside of public collections. Should either one of those two scarcest of printed Bibles ever come on the market, the bidding for such a *rara avis* will surely soar to the dizzyest of heights.

Just as there are folk, who contend that Francis Bacon wrote the works of Shakespeare, and that a Spaniard wrote Dante's *Divine Comedy*, so there be some, who would have us believe that Fust & Schoeffer set up and printed Gutenberg's Bible. Against their far fetched arguments speaks the fact that Fust & Schoeffer, when they launched their later printing firm, took good care conspicuously to sign all their jointly printed publications in self-advertising colophons, embellished with an unmistakable trademark. They did this for the very purpose, clearly, of making their wares stand out from those of their more modest predecessor and rival, who, like the humble monastic scribes and illuminators of old, forebore from signing his masterpiece.

It should be recalled furthermore that Fust & Schoeffer as early as 1462, only seven years after the first Bible was printed, published a very costly different edition of the complete Scriptures in Latin, of which copies are still extant. It is unreasonable to suppose that Fust & Schoeffer, if they already had the 42-line Bible set-up and if they had all its available types in stock, would have gone to the appalling trouble and expense of setting-up and printing another costly Bible text in different type. Such a supposition is all the more unreasonable, because the 42-line Bible, as it stood in type, called for no general revision by its publisher, since it was an acknowledged masterpiece of printing and textual correctness, having been corrected before publication by the Reverend Hermann Guenther, priest of St. Christopher's Church in Mainz, a learned scholar of the Vulgate.

The facts really were that Fust & Schoeffer in equity had not the right to reprint their rival's Bible with his own former types, and so had to print another, if they were to print any Bible at all.

Fust clearly did not long keep the types forfeited to him by Gutenberg, for we know that the subsequent and inferior 36-line Bible was reprinted from the same types and text by another later publisher, believed to have been Gutenberg's disciple, Albrecht Pfister of Bamberg.

The earliest recorded mention of Gutenberg's celebrated Bible, as already mentioned, occurs in Johannes Koelhoff's chronicle of Cologne, printed in 1499. There it is stated that the printer Ulrich Zell from Hanau near Mainz told the chronicler how the golden year 1550 marked the beginning of printing and that the first book to be printed was a Bible in Latin with large letters like those used in Missals. "The first inventor of printing was a burgher of Mainz, who was born in Strassburg, and whose name was Johan Gudenburch."

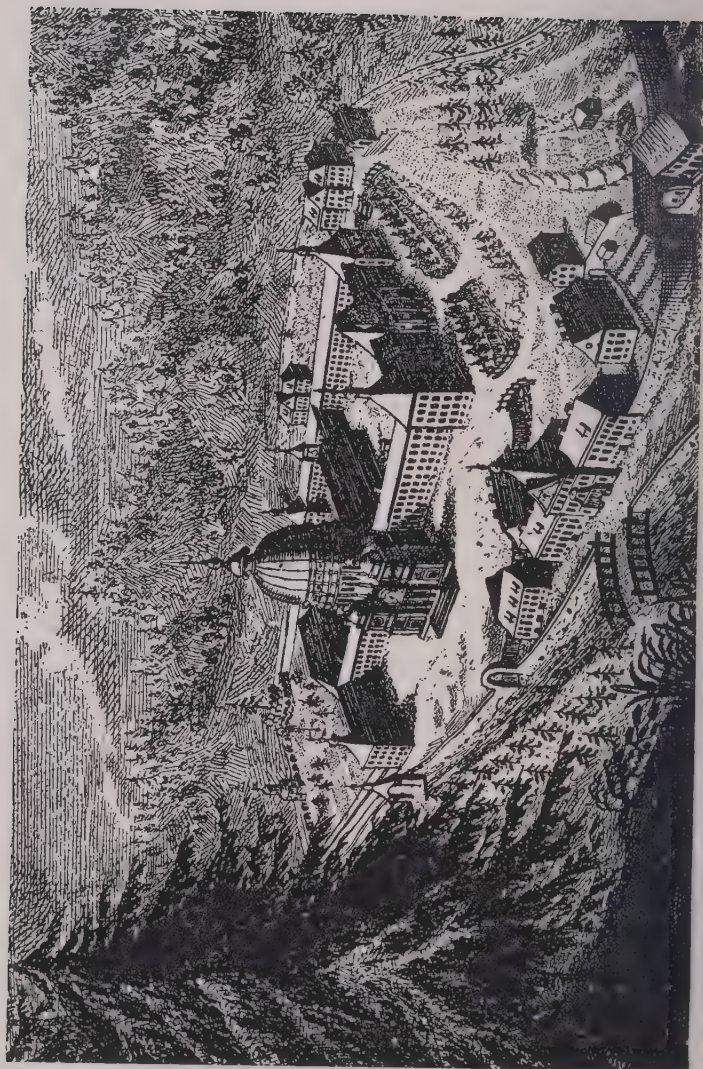
A few years later Treitheim, then abbot of Hirschau, in his annals of that cloister, (not printed until 1690) recorded how Peter Schoeffer of Gernsheim had told him what expenses his father-in-law Fust had incurred in the work on the first Bible and how it had cost him more than a thousand ducats before the third quire of the great book was completed.

In the first volume of an incomplete Gutenberg Bible on parchment, once a family heirloom of the Von Nostitzes in Prague, but now at St. Gabriel in California, is a gloss written in a 15th century hand, stating that even a first volume only of the incomplete Bible was precious, both parts together being worth 100 Rhenish guilders. "*A. D. prima pars bibliae preciose/ ambe partes valent centum flor. renenses.*"

Cornelius van Beughem, the first compiler of a catalog of incunabula in 1688, briefly refers to the famous Bible thus: *Biblia Latina primis typis exscripta Mogunt. 1450.*

Toward the close of the 17th century, likewise, Hendreich, the librarian of the *Koenigliche Bibliothek* in Berlin, who died in 1702, identified the Gutenberg Bible, still in that library, as the work, in large Missal types, mentioned by Ulrich Zainer in the Cologne Chronicle of 1499.

More than a generation later, in 1739, it is recorded of the



ST. BLASIUS ABBEY

FROM A GERMAN PRINT MADE AFTER THE CLOISTER'S CONFLAGRATION OF 1769 A.D.

French bibliophile Sallier "*qu'il trouva cette Bible Latine chez les Cordeliers de Moutiers, Capitale de la Tarentaise, & il l'acheta pour un demi écu.*"

Some years after that purchase of a Gutenberg Bible for one small goldpiece the great value of such Bibles came to be recognized. Zacharias Conrad Uffenbach of Frankfurt on the Main records that 200 Thalers were paid for a Gutenberg Bible he first saw in 1729.

The spendthrift grandfather of Frederic the Great is understood to have paid that price for an incomplete Gutenberg Bible on vellum, which is still the greatest treasure of the Berlin State Library. The typographic value of Gutenberg's work in this Bible was first recognized in 1747 by Wedekind, who described it in the first catalog of the Berlin Library as the oldest Bible print. Before him Christian Gotlieb Schwartz of Altdorf in his *Primaria quaedam documenta de origine typographiae* laid stress on that Gutenberg Bible in 1740.

Twenty-three years later Guillaume François de Bure, a French bibliographer, while browsing in the Mazarin Library at Paris, came across a Gutenberg Bible there, which he enthusiastically described in his *Bibliographie Instructive*, published in 1763. Since then all of Gutenberg's 42-line Bibles have been dubbed "Mazarin Bibles" by some careless bibliographers.

Meanwhile Johann Georg Schellhorn, a librarian of the little town of Memmingen in Suabia, had discovered two volumes of an incomplete 36-line paper Bible in his library and made such a literary ado over it that many bibliographers came to see his Bible. This led to the discovery of the famous 42-line Gutenberg Bible on vellum in the neighboring abbey of Saint Blasius, the old-time Cella Alba, in the Black Forest,—the *incunabulum incunabulorum* which is the subject of this monograph.

Schellhorn¹ immediately trudged through the forest to St. Blasius to inspect the great Bible, which he described later together with his Memmingen treasure in a Latin treatise, *De Antiquissima Latinorum Bibliorum editione*, published in 1760 at Ulm.

At that time the Prince-Abbot of St. Blasius was Martin Gerbert, himself a distinguished bibliophile, who in 1759 lost no time in returning Schellhorn's visit in order to compare the St. Blasius Bible with that of Memmingen. Together they discussed a statement of their contemporary, Andrée Chevallier, who in his work on the Invention of Printing had written that the first book ever printed from cast types was a Latin Bible with large Missal letters, all copies of which, according to Chevallier, were lost.

Gerbert published his analysis of both Bibles in a Latin book of his travels, *Iter Alemanicum*, printed at St. Blasius in 1765, together with the first facsimile of a Gutenberg type page. The worthy abbot's description of his cloister's prize book, now incorporated in the Vollbehr Collection, I translate thus:

"Our St. Blasius treasury of books contains the oldest printed Bible in Latin in three complete volumes, whereas Memmingen has but two volumes, incomplete. Our Bible has no title page and in its letters and words is full of abbreviations, wherefore it is difficult to proceed in the reading of it, unless one is an adept in this manner of reading. One does not find any double sounding letters, whereas frequently two or three letters are thus combined that they look like a single one. The first letters of each book and chapter are not printed, but are painted in diverse colors by a painter, and the marks of differentiation between the words are everywhere added in red cinobar. The titles, too, so it appears, are not in printed letters, but have been painted thereon with cinobar. On the upper margin the names of the books are written in with a pen dipped in cinobar, but differentiated with blue color. The numbers of the pages are lacking, likewise at the bottom any indication of the syllable to come. Except the double and single points, which some times occur at a wrong place, and the question mark, which likewise is not always at a right place, there are no other punctuation marks. At the end of the lines, where words must be separated, the division is indicated by two little parallel lines, as we do nowadays in our writing, and these little double lines extend beyond the words,

so that one can find them on the blank margin. Over the vowel i in our oldest books they used to put the sharp accent of the Greeks, but in this Bible everywhere the upper part of a little halfmoon takes its place. Since this is not to be remarked in others, this is to be accounted a peculiarity of our Bible, differentiating it from others. The spelling smacks strongly of the rough manners of early times. Thus we find the spellings "michi" for *mihi*, "nichil" for *nihil*, "ortus" for *hortus*, "ymnus" for *hymnus* and "olocaustum" for *holocaustum*. Our Bible is printed on parchment. Schelhorn's on paper. His edition counts on every page (sic) but 38 lines, whereas ours has 40 in the preface of S. Hieronymus and on the first page of the First Book of Moses; has but 41 on the next page of the same leaf; and further 42 lines . . . In regard to our Bible, we do not venture to determine, whether it was printed from movable or from immovable types. If the former, as pointed out by Schelhorn, we are drawn into a learned controversy, whether his or our edition is to be regarded as the first. If the latter, we leave it to those, who love such studies, to determine what is to be thought of the origin of this rarest of Bible editions."

In the forenoon of July 23, 1769, four years after this description of the Bible had been published, the precious book was nearly lost forever. A sudden fire broke out in the wooden buildings of the cloister and all the monastery burned down, including the library. The three huge tomes of the precious Bible as well as a few of the most prized codices of ancient manuscripts were saved from the conflagration, only by casting them out of the library windows. The abbot was so intent on saving his beloved books that the other monks had to drag him from the flames. After the restoration of the abbey the great Bible again took its place of honor in the new library, which was restocked with good books obtained from France by the wise abbot after the suppression of the Jesuit order in that country.

Because of its possession of the best preserved Gutenberg Bible on vellum the cloister library of St. Blasius thereafter be-

came a place of pilgrimage for bibliophiles. Among others the Prussian writer, Friedrich Nicolai, came to St. Blasius in 1781 and later described the monastery with its famous library in his *Reise durch Deutschland*, published in 1796.

In 1781 came Professor Heinrich Sanders, another German bibliophile, who wrote:

"We saw first among old printed books a Latin Bible in three tomes. I inspected the Old Testament on parchment, of the year 1450, by Guttenberg (sic) without his name, or that of the printing place or any date. Of the same Bible other copies are said to be in Paris, Berlin and Brunswick. It is believed that there are barely five specimens in all the world . . . At the end of the last volume I found no colophon. The types appear to be already *litterae fusae*, for the letters and lines are quite uniform."

Shortly after Professor Sander's visit Georg Wilhelm Zapf, a privy counsellor and learned man, came through the Black Forest and stopped at St. Blasius. In his book of travels, published at Erlangen in 1783, he wrote at length about the famous Gutenberg Bible, which was shown him by the venerable abbot in person.

Abbot Martin II, so Zapf wrote, was well aware that the three volumes of the St. Blasius Bible were the oldest printed Scriptures on vellum—*antiquissimi codices Bibliorum in membrana impressi*—but he was not sure whether they were printed from movable types—*nostra quod attinet Biblia, non ego sim, qui determinare ausim, immobilibus an mobilibus typis sint impressa*. On this point, as well as on the precise age of this earliest printed Bible, the abbot conceded possible differences of opinion.

Zapf also discussed this Bible with Father Aemilian Ussermann, the cloister librarian, who had written a learned Latin dissertation on the peculiarities of the three volumes. This treatise Zapf reproduced in its original Latin to the extent of four and a half quarto pages in his *Literarische Reisen*, published in 1783 at Augsburg.

In his dissertation Ussermann analyzes minute textual and typographic details and records that the three volumes came to St. Blasius from Paris. While noting this the librarian voices a suspicion that this was one of the specimens of the new art of printing, which Johannes Faust fraudulently sold as a manuscript in Paris. *Suspitor exemplar hoc unum ex illis esse, quae Iohannes Faust Parisiis (unde nostrum exemplar habemus) pro manuscriptis vendidit.*

In 1786 Zapf wrote again about the Gutenberg Bible at St. Blasius, expressing his conviction that this was the oldest printed book in the world, and that Father Ussermann was right when he declared it one of those earliest prints, which Faust palmed off as manuscripts in Paris.

Two years later the Bibliothèque Royale of France acquired from the Benedictine Library at Mainz its famous Gutenberg Bible on vellum which is still preserved in Paris. In the same year—1788—Lord Spencer bought from Cloister Metten in Bavaria a Gutenberg Bible on paper, which is now preserved in the Manchester Library.

The late Paul Schwenke, Germany's foremost expert on incunabula, in his *Johannes Gutenberg's zweiundvierzigzeilige Bibel* (Leipzig, 1923) thus classified the famous three volumes of St. Blasius—St. Paul:

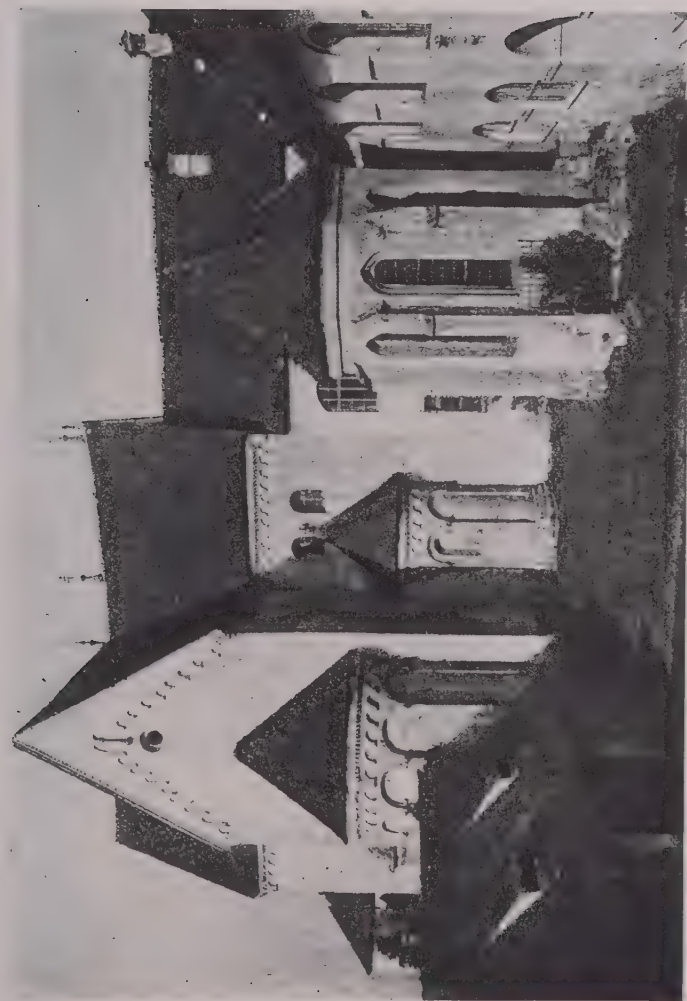
“The Gutenberg Bible on parchment, 407x300 mm, 3 volumes (Petateuch-Esdra; Tobias-Ezechiel; Daniel-Apocalypse).

Chapters and verses rubricated only in Vol. I from 1 to 130. Page captions in Lombard types, the single letters alternately red and blue. Chapter numerals in red Missal types, mostly without additions. Chapter initials alternately red and blue. The big initials simple, but painstakingly executed, with the body of the individual letter in red and blue, often with plain white interiors, or with mixed red and blue ornamentations after the manner of manuscript psalmbook initials.

Three corresponding bindings of the 16th century, white calf-skin embossed without coloring. One of the protuberant rolls on the back of one of the volumes



THE ABBEY OF ST. PAUL IN THE VALLEY OF LAVANT, 1928



THE LIBRARY BUILDING OF ST. PAUL'S ABBEY

retains tracings of the date 1560. This Bible was originally intended to be bound in two volumes, as indicated by traces on page 324 of Vol. I and at signature R of Vol. II.

Formerly owned by the Benedictines of St. Blasius in the Black Forest, as indicated by their copper plate *ex libris* on the flyleaf of each volume. During the Napoleonic Wars, when the monks of St. Blasius fled to Carinthia, they brought this Bible to their monastery of St. Paul in the valley of Lavant near Klagenfurt.

Described by Mart. Gerbert, *Iter Allemannicum*, ed. I, San Blasius, 1773, see page 164 with plate 7 (facsimile of eighteen lines from Vol. I sig. 5R). Also described by Aemilian Ussermann and by G. W. Zapf in his "*Reisen in einige Kloester Schwabens*" (Travels among some Suabian cloisters), pp. 68-73, Erlangen, 1786."

After the French Revolution, when a French army came over the Rhine, and precious books and works of art became a prey to rapacity, the Benedictine friars at St. Blasius felt driven to seek a safer place of refuge for their monastic treasures. Father Kettenacker, then the cloister librarian, in his diary thus described what happened:

"21. July, 1794. A conference was held this forenoon what was to be done in this critical case and whither we are to flee.

23. July, 1794. Today, on the anniversary of our sad fire in 1768, the archives were taken out of the cloister and the best books in our library were packed up and removed.

24. August, 1794. All our archives taken to Klingnau.

3. July, 1796. Since beginning of the month we are working day and night to remove our better things from Klingnau.

7. July, 1796. Worked the whole day at removing our best things or to have our trusty servants hide them. The library gave the most trouble.

1801. Most of the volumes of better note and value



PORTAL TO ABBEY OF ST. PAUL IN CARINTHIA

have now been taken out of our library and removed to our place of protection where they lie for the present. Woe betide! War having broken anew between the rulers of Austria and Gaul, the Lord only knows how long our books may lie safe there."

That place of protection—*locus tutior*—was the Benedictine abbey Einsiedeln in Switzerland, which in its turn became unsafe, when a French army under Massena fought its way through Switzerland and over the Rhine. So the friars, with their precious Bible and with other last remnants of their former library from St. Blasius fled eastward across the Alps to another cloister on Mount Pyhrn in Upper Austria. Thus their former monastery of St. Blasius, after nearly a thousand years of peace, had to be abandoned and was secularized.

The friars had good reasons to fear the rapacity of the invaders, for the French generals and their unbridled soldiery were notorious as voracious looters. Thus a complete Gutenberg Bible on parchment was looted from the university library of Mainz in 1793 by Merlin de Thionville, who in 1801 offered to sell the looted Bible for 50 louis d'or. Another Gutenberg Bible on paper, now in Philadelphia, is known to have been stolen in 1800 by a French officer from Cloister Marienbaum at Xanten. This piece of loot turned up later in France in the possession of Pierre Henri Larcher. A third Gutenberg Bible, together with other works of art, was stolen by French soldiers from the Augustine Monastery at Rebdorf. That looted Bible later turned up in the hands of Abbé Favier of Lille, who sold it for 2,025 francs.

From their temporary retreat on Mount Pyhrn the harassed friars of St. Blasius in April 1809 finally moved to their present Benedictine abbey of St. Paul in the valley of Lavant in Carinthia, and to this safe retreat their cherished Gutenberg Bible was brought from its hiding place. This was expressly recorded in a history of the abbey of St. Paul by Father Beda Schroll, who also records that the new cloister library gradually was enriched by thousands of volumes, among them no less than 600 incunabula.

These enviable treasures as well as the whereabouts of the three Gutenberg volumes, later known as the St. Paul Bible, were kept dark in view of the new war that swept over Carinthia shortly after those old books were hidden away in their new retreat in the valley of Lavant.

So it came about that even the best informed bibliographers of the last century remained in ignorance about the later fate of that particular Gutenberg Bible. Thus Joseph Basile Bernard van Praet in his *Catalogue des livres imprimés sur vélin*, written in 1822, deplores the loss of "a fourth vellum Bible, divided in three volumes, once in the library of St. Blasius in the Black Forest." C. A. Schaab, a German historian of the art of printing, wrote in 1830 concerning that same Gutenberg Bible: "What has become of it is known neither to me nor to the well-informed M. van Praet." As late as 1886 Antonius van der Linde suggests in his *Geschichte der Erfindung der Buchdruckerkunst* that the St. Blasius Bible after the secularization of that abbey must have perished as old parchment, used up by modern goldsmiths or bookbinders in the Black Forest region.

At last the historic St. Blasius—St. Paul Bible was rediscovered for general scholarship in 1900 by Paul Schwenke, the greatest authority on Gutenberg Bibles, and his welcome find was further authenticated in 1911 by Seymour de Ricci in his *Catalogue raisonné des premières impressions De Mayence*.

The biggest sensation for the book world came in 1926, (just one hundred years after the death of Prince-Abbot Rottler, who had brought the famous Gutenberg Bible to St. Paul) when Dr. Odilo Frankl, the present abbot of St. Paul, announced to the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna that his monastery's great Bible had been sold to Dr. Vollbehr of Berlin, as the highest bidder. Since then there have been all kinds of contradictory rumors about Dr. Vollbehr's plans with this most valuable of Bibles, but at the present writing that *incunabulum incunabulorum* still remains the resplendent crown jewel in the vast treasure known as the Vollbehr Collection.



DR. OTTO H. F. VOLLBEHR WITH HIS GUTENBERG BIBLE

A LINGUISTIC EPILOGUE

FOR the edification of the curious minded I will now explain my use of the Latin term *incunabulum incunabulorum*, the very existence of which words has been amiably challenged by some of the most noted American scholars of the ancient lore of incunabula.

According to those scholars, the Latin word *incunabula*, an intensive diminutive of the Latin word *cuna*, meaning cradle or crib, (Spanish: *cuna*; Italian: *culla*) is a singular noun of practically the same meaning as *cuna*, making it permissible to speak in English of "an incunabula," i.e. a cradle, meaning a piece of printing dating from the time when that art was still in its cradle, corresponding to the German singular noun *Wiegendruck*, which means literally "cradle-print."

For my own use of the word *incunabula* as a plural of the neuter gender, meaning things pertaining to the cradle, such as swaddling clothes, coverlets, pillows, nipples, rattles and the like (comprised in the modern French words *layette* and *couchette*) hence by derivation: "things pertaining to infancy," I cite the following authorities among others:

Cunabulum, in the singular, is defined by Isidorus in his *Origines* as "a little bed in which infants lie." The same word in the singular is used by Cassiodorus in his *Orthographia* and by Adamantius and also occurs in an anonymous contemporary gloss to an ancient Roman manuscript mentioned by Forcellini in his *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon*.

Cunabula, as a neuter in the plural, occurs repeatedly in ancient Roman classics. The elder Pliny calls swallows' nests on the ground *cunabula*. Had the usage of *cunabula* in his day been that of a feminine singular noun, Pliny would have had to write *cunabulas* in the feminine accusative plural, not *cunabula* in the neuter accusative plural.

Figuratively the plural *cunabula* means "beginnings" or "origins". Plautus writes *usque a cunabulis*, "from the begin-

nings". Apuleius employs the expression: *A primis cunabulis huius urbis conditæ*, "from the first beginnings of this city." Pomponius in his Digest refers to a standard work on law as "a book which contains the very origins of law, so to speak," *liber qui veluti cunabula juris continet*. Here, too, Pomponius would have had to write *cunabulas* or better *cunabulam*, had the usage of the word *cunabula* been in the singular feminine.

Incunabulum, neuter singular, and *incunabula*, neuter plural, is plainly an intensive or specific derivative from *cunabulum* and means either the bedding in the little bedstead or any other appropriate thing found in a cradle. Plautus in Act. 5, Verse 13 of his *Truculentus*, referring to an expected birth of twins, uses both the words *cunis* and *incunabulis* in the dative plural when he lets one of his characters voice the urgent need of cradles and swaddling clothes for the impending emergency.

Therefore Forcellini in his *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon*, accurately defines *incunabula* as things that are put in cradles or used to complete and adorn them, such as swaddling clothes, cradle straps, the bedding of a crib (*lectulus*), coverlets, pillows and a small mattress.

Figuratively *incunabula* in the neuter plural, like *cunabula*, means "beginnings", "origins", i.e. "infancy". Cicero in his *De Oratore* 13 writes: *Non alienum fuerit de oratoris quasi incunabulis dicere*, "it will not be a digression to discuss the actual beginnings of public speaking." Similarly Quintilian in his *Pro"mum* writes: *Ab ipsis dicendi veluti incunabulis*, "from the very cradles of oratory, as it were." Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* writes: "Now I shall proceed to our native mountains, the cradles of our race,"—*ad montes nativos, incunabula nostra*.

Herewith I have cited enough ancient authorities for the correct use and meaning of the old word *incunabulum*, but I dare say some authority among ancient authors might also be found for *incunabula* in the singular feminine, since the usage of many Latin words varied at different epochs and in different localities of the Roman empire. The plural words *cunae* and *cunulae* for a single crib and a little cradle, for instance, are used

by some classical authors instead of the more proper singular. Similarly *incunabula* might perhaps be found to have been used in the singular feminine, thus excusing the bizarre sounding modern English usage: "an *incunabula*", just as many Englishmen and Americans nowadays speak of "a data" in the singular instead of using the more correct but perhaps more pedantic singular *datum*, meaning something "given". If *incunabula* is taken to be a singular noun, then the plural must needs be *incunabu'æ*.

The designation *incunabula* for the earliest printed books of Christendom was first used in 1653 by Phillippe Labbé in a Latin treatise on the old books of the royal library of Paris. Labbé introduces his list of nearly thirteen hundred first editions of the fifteenth century with the sentence: *Primae editiones illae, quae ante centum quinquaginta annos incunabula prodierunt*, "Those first editions, which 150 years ago came forth as *incunabula*." After him Cornelius van Beughem in the earliest catalogue of fifteenth century prints ever compiled (published at Amsterdam in 1688), entitled his work *Incunabula Typographiae, sive catalogus librorum scriptorumque proximis ab inventione typographiae annis usque ad annum Christ M. D.* In English: "Cradle books of printing, or a catalogue of books and authors from the earliest years after the invention of printing until the year of our Lord 1500."

The word *incunabula* might have been used with equal aptness for any works of art in their infancy, such as archaic sculptures, bronzes, terra cottas, manuscripts, engravings, etchings or printed works. Collectively such works of primitive art are infantile beginnings, i.e. cradles or cradle things of the art in question. Therefore Konrad Haebler in his *Handbuch der Inkunabelkunde* says of the figurative word *incunabula*: "*Der Name Incunabula besagt nicht mehr und nicht weniger, als dass es sich um Gegenstaende handelt aus einer Zeit, in der die betreffende Kunst noch in der Wiege lag. Daher die deutsche Bezeichnung Wiegendrucke.*" "The name *incunabula* expresses nothing more nor less than objects of art from a remote time when the art in question

still lay in its cradle. Hence the German expression *Wiegendrucke*."

Such is the usage of the modern French word *incunable*. Thus in a catalogue of the French Bibliothèque Nationale, (printed at Paris in 1903), in an enumeration of engravings we find this title: *Deux cent incunables de la gravure du Département des Etampes*.

By analogy some of our writers have coined the new English word "incunable", with the accent on the second syllable, but they have not succeeded in getting this accepted for such common use as the identical French word, nor like the German word *Inkunabel*, plural *Inkunabeln*.

In correct English usage, the word "incunabula", in my opinion, should be strictly limited to printed texts or titles or printers' marks from the middle of the fifteenth century to its end. While previous blockbooks, printed from a single woodcut with text, or the later products of some of the first printing presses of the early sixteenth century in England, Spain, Portugal, Mexico and Scandinavia are undoubtedly as rare and primitive as those of preceding printers in Germany, Bohemia, Switzerland, Italy, France and the Netherlands, so that the former books fitly could be said to be in their infancy or cradle; nevertheless neither they nor still earlier Chinese, Korean and Japanese prints from movable types or full page blocks are rated by competent scholars as incunabula. After all, even the most comprehensive students and insatiable collectors of early prints must draw the line somewhere in their ever extending researches. So they might as well draw the incunabula line between the Spring of 1450 and the last day of the year 1500.

Hence, I feel justified in every sense of the word, when I extol the prize piece of the vast Vollbehr Collection of printed works of the fifteenth century as our *Incunabulum Incunabulorum*.

COLOPHON

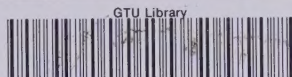
Anno Domini MCMIIXXX nye unto ye greene of Grande
 Merci in Gotham towne / erstwhile yclept Nieuwe Amster-
 dam / I ye humble scribe / whilom sittying in mine studye
 plottynge howe to eschewe slothe & idlenesse / nowe render
 thonkes unto our Lorde Almighty how this Saynt Ildefons
 feaste / when befell mine owne birthedaye / I did compleate
 mine lytil boke / for as much as in ye wryting of hit my penne
 is worne / mine right honde weary & not stedfaste / mine
 eyen dimmed with overmuch studye of harde Latyn wordes
 / & my courage not so fayne to labour as hit hath bin
 erstwhiles / Nowe thanks lykewise unto ye gentle squires
 Currier & Zeese for yeir willying loanes of payntings of
 ye noble master prynter John of ye Goode Hille on ye river
 Rhine & of ye uglye countenance of his famulus ye wicked
 Faustus / lykewise unto ye goode abbot of Saynt Paulus in
 farre Carynthia for ye counterfeit presentments of his aun-
 cyent abbey / lykewise to ye lerned doctōr Vollbehr for his
 portrayal of hymselfe with his most costliest Holy Writ /
 verily ye Boke of Bokes / & for his reckless loanes of
 dyverse auncyent pryntes outhen his riche boke colleccion /
 Nowe gentyl Reader prithe forbeare from wrathe nor
 scorne agaynst mine overmuch leanyng towardes harde &
 uncouth forraign wordes / certaynly tis harde to playse every
 clerke lerned in auncyent lore bycause of dyversitē & chaunge
 of ye antick Roman tongue into holy Churche Latyn / so I
 stooode abashed / nathless in mine humble iudgemente playn
 Englyshe termes what be dayly used in ye mouthes
 of common folke ben lyghter to be under-
 stonden in lieu of fulsome
 Latyn nor Greke /
 Amen!

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